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Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554

DEC 17 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of )  
Advanced Television Systems )  
and Their Impact Upon the )  
Existing Television Broadcast )  
Service )

MM Docket No. 87-268

COMMENTS OF FREEDOM COMMUNICATIONS, INC. ON THE  
MSTV PROPOSED TABLE OF ALLOTMENTS

Freedom Communications, Inc. (Freedom) submits these comments in response to the Commission's December 2, 1997 request for comment on the proposed alternative table of allotments submitted by Maximum Service Broadcasters, Inc. and other broadcasters (MSTV) in the above-referenced proceeding.

After years of effort and after receiving substantial public comment, the Commission has established a framework in the *Sixth Report and Order* that will allow DTV to become a reality. While no DTV allotment table will ever be perfect, Freedom believes that the Commission's table is a reasonable compromise that provides at long last the much-needed certainty the broadcast industry needs to transition to DTV.<sup>1</sup> Freedom is very concerned that MSTV's proposal could jeopardize a prompt transition to DTV and will adversely affect those broadcast stations, like Freedom's WLNE-TV in the Providence-New Bedford market, whose DTV needs appear to be met by the Commission's table, but are not accommodated by MSTV's

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<sup>1</sup> In connection with the industry's need for certainty, Freedom encourages the Commission to clarify that it will retain Channels 2-6 for DTV operations at the end of the transition period.

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proposed alternative table. Freedom therefore urges the Commission to reject MSTV's proposal and retain the Commission's DTV allotment table without modification.

As set forth more fully in the pleadings Freedom previously has filed in this proceeding,<sup>2</sup> WLNE-TV historically has been disadvantaged because of its existing transmitter site at Tiverton, Rhode Island. Located about 20 miles from the antenna farm where virtually all other stations in the Providence-New Bedford market are located, WLNE-TV currently cannot provide a comparable over-the-air signal to those of the other network stations in that market. DTV provides an opportunity for Freedom to correct this disadvantage and improve WLNE's ability to serve the public. Specifically, the Commission's allotment table, which assigns DTV Channel 49 to WLNE-TV, appears to provide the flexibility needed to allow WLNE-TV to relocate its transmitter site to the Rehoboth antenna farm without causing increased interference to other stations. In doing so, the Commission's proposed table goes a long way toward resolving a serious competitive problem that WLNE-TV has endured for more than 30 years.<sup>3</sup>

MSTV's proposal, in contrast, does not appear to provide similar flexibility to WLNE. Based on the preliminary review conducted by Freedom's engineering consultants, it appears that MSTV's proposal could preclude WLNE's flexibility to relocate its tower to Rehoboth. Moreover, even if it stayed at its current location, WLNE transmissions would create significantly more interference to two NTSC stations in the Boston market under MSTV's proposal than under the Commission's table.

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<sup>2</sup> Comments of Freedom Communications, Inc. (filed Nov. 22, 1996); Reply Comments of Freedom Communications, Inc. (filed January 24, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Any changes to this proposed table, of course, may eliminate the flexibility for Freedom to move its tower in this manner.

While MSTV may believe that its alternative DTV table solves some problems, it is clear that it also creates a host of new problems. For the reasons set forth above, Freedom believes that the Commission's DTV table is a reasonable compromise that allows DTV service to begin at the earliest possible time and solves WLNE's problems with its current transmitter site. Freedom therefore urges the Commission to dismiss MSTV's proposal and retain the Commission's DTV allotment table without modification.

Respectfully submitted,

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